

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 6-10, and 12-21 are currently pending. Claims 2 and 3 have been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 16 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 10, and 16 were objected to as containing various informalities; and Claims 1, 2, 8-10, 14, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,298,801 to Heitman et al. (hereinafter “the ‘801 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,561,699 to Fenner (hereinafter “the ‘699 patent”); Claims 3, 4, 6, and 7 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form; and Claims 12, 13, and 16-21 were allowed.

Applicant respectfully submits that the objections to Claims 1, 10, and 16 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims. Claims 1, 10, and 16 have been amended to correct the informalities noted in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, the objections to Claims 1, 10, and 16 are believed to have been overcome.

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of Claim 1 is rendered moot by the present amendment to that claim. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations recited in Claims 2 and 3. Accordingly, based on the indicated allowability of Claim 3, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) are in condition for formal allowance.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 12, 13, and 16 (and all associated dependent claims) are in condition for formal allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

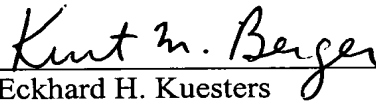
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